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ANNUAL REPORT

IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

The principle activities of this section during 1973 were the Milk Recording Program and the Dairy Cattle Importation Program. Extension activities continued in cooperation with other branches and divisions.

The conversion of herds enrolled on the manual D.H.I. program to the computerized D.H.I. system continued in 1973; by year-end 519 of 529 herds had been converted.

With the support of the Systems Design and Data Analysis Branch and the cooperation of Dairy Branch Farm Inspection Staff, the computerized D.H.I. service was extended to all of the major dairying areas of the province by July 1, 1973. Transition programs were designed to insure maximum utilization of manual D.H.I. records.

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Milk Recording

D.H.I. continued to be offered to herd owners throughout the province on an Owner-Sampler (non-supervised) basis only. Monthly milk samples were lifted by the herd owners from individual cows and forwarded to the Central Testing Laboratory in Edmonton for butterfat determination. Samples were transferred to and from the herd owners by public transport or by D.H.I. technicians.

A total of 25,984 cows were enrolled on the Milk Recording Program in 1973. Milk production continued to decline to an average of 11,865 pounds of milk per cow-year; butterfat production averaged 418.5 pounds per cow-year.

There were 529 herds under test in 1973, an increase of 26 herds and 2,904 cows compared to 1972. The increase in cows tested was partly due to the larger size of the herds on test; the average number of cows per herd reached a record high of 49.1 cows.

D.H.I. Technicians made an estimated 5,652 farm visits, ear-tagged 5,078 heifer calves and maintained calf identification records for herd owners enrolled on the Route Plan and computerized D.H.I program.

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The Edmonton Route Plan program was extended to include the Westlock-Barrhead-Sangudo areas in May 1972. Route Plan services were initiated in the Peace River region and the Vegreville-Vermilion-Bonnyville-St. Paul areas in June 1972, with the herds converting directly to the computerized D.H.I. program.

A total of 177,685 Dairy Herd Improvement milk samples were tested in the Central Testing Laboratory, O. S. Longman Laboratory Building, Edmonton, during 1973 compared to 162,715 in 1972.

Summary

The average production of all cows on test showed a decrease of 221 pounds of milk, and a decrease of 9.2 pounds of butterfat over the previous year. This decrease was primarily a reaction to economic conditions.

The following tables summarize the Milk Recording program.

TABLE I

HERDS ON FULL SYSTEM-COMPUTERIZED SERVICE BY REGION-1973.

Region	Herds	Cows Tested	Completed Records	--BCA--- Milk	Fat	Average Production Milk	Fat
1-Lethbridge	25	1676	1154	119	111	12622	441
2-Calgary	30	1934	1487	117	112	12190	432
4-Red Deer	130	6503	4663	112	108	11650	418
5-Vermilion	31	1250	884	111	106	11371	405
6-Edmonton	192	9307	6894	114	109	12039	427
7-Peace River	9	443	309	116	108	12174	415
	417	21113	15391	114	109	11944	424

TABLE II

HERDS ADDED TO COMPUTERIZED D.H.I. SYSTEM

Herds	Cows Tested	Average Production Milk	Fat
102	4102	11591	381

TABLE III

MANUAL PROGRAM - MAIL ORDER

Herds	Cows Tested	Average Production Milk	Fat
10	330	10301	379

Average milk production of all cows under Dairy Herd Improvement Programs based on tables I, II, III above, is 11,865 lbs.

TABLE IV
MILK RECORDING-3 YEAR SUMMARY

	1971	1972	1973
Number of herds under test	507	503	529
Number of cows under test	21,936	23,080	25,984
Average number of cows per herd	43.3	45.6	49.1
*Number of cow-years	16,220	17,292	
Average number of cow-years per herd	32.0	34.3	
Average production of milk (lbs.)	12,206	12,086	11,865
Average production of butterfat (lbs.)	429.7	427.7	418.5
Average test (%)	3.52	3.54	3.53

*Herd averages on the basis of cow-years. The total number of cows on test during the year was used in determining the herd average. Where a new cow was placed on test, or a cow was sold or died, only that part of the year in which she produced was used.

Reports and Competitions

Annual reports, showing both total and average milk and butterfat production, were sent to all herd owners and district agriculturists' offices. Herd owners on the computerized D.H.I. program received monthly production-management reports as well as semi-annual summaries on their herds. Rank listings of these herds were circulated to Department staff on a regular basis.

Certified Milk and Butterfat Production Records were issued to herd owners on the Mail Order Program. The Cooperative program of certification of production for cows in herds transferring from the Alberta D.H.I. program to the Federal R.O.P. program was continued. Dairy Branch data provided the basis for scoring production and herd improvement competitions conducted by the Alberta Dairymen's Association.

Dairy Cattle Import Program

The objective of this program, introduced in March 1973, is to provide an incentive to dairymen to increase their milk production through a program of importing replacement dairy cattle into Alberta for sale at cost.

Tentative orders were received from 250 dairymen for replacement dairy cattle, 142 of which were filled by August 6, 1973

IMPORT PROGRAM SUMMARY

Breed	Number Imported
Registered Holstein-Friesian	357
Registered Guernseys	107
Registered Brown Swiss	17
Registered Jerseys	24
Registered Ayrshire	1
Grade Holstein-Friesian	486
Total (November'73)	992

Sharply rising dairy cattle prices throughout Canada and the United States during August temporarily priced Alberta dairymen out of the market.

ANNUAL HERD IMPROVEMENT COMPETITION

Evert Tekelenberg entered the D.H.I. Recording Program in January 1968 with a herd of 18 cows.

During the first five years Mr. Tekelenberg was on test, he maintained a herd of approximately 17 cows and his production had its ups and downs. During the past year he increased his herd to 31 cows and increased his production by 3,078 lb.s of milk and 111.0 lbs. of butterfat to a herd average of 9,618 lbs. milk and 365 lbs. butterfat.

Mr. Tekelenberg converted from the Mail Order Program to the D.H.I. Computerized Program in September of 1972.

GREATER AVERAGE BUTTERFAT COMPETITION

Norman Jesperson is a second time winner of the Greater Average Butterfat Competition, winning this competition for the second year in a row.

Norman entered his grade Holsteins on the D.H.I. Edmonton Route Program in February of 1970 with 37 cows. In his first 9 months on test his herd of 57 cows averaged 14,470 lbs. of milk and 513.7 lbs. of butterfat. In his first full year on test in 1972 the herd of 69 cows averaged 14,981 lbs. of milk and 560 lbs. of butterfat, placing Norman second in the Greater Average Butterfat Competition. In 1972 Norman placed first with an average of 16,401 lbs. milk and 612 lbs. butterfat. Norman's 1973 average milk production was 15,617 lbs. and 561 lbs. butterfat.

Congratulations are in order for Norman for his consistently high placing in the Greater Average Butterfat Competition since entering into the D.H.I. Program.

AGGREGATE HERD IMPROVEMENT COMPETITION

Mr. Fr[illegible]d Malak entered his herd of grade Holsteins on the D.H.I. Recording Program in June of 1968. At that time his herd consisted of 34 cows.

In his first complete year on test, Mr. Malak had a herd of 44 cows with a herd average of 7,275 lbs. of milk and 262 lbs. of butterfat. By 1971 the herd had increased to 54 cows and a herd average of 10,339 lbs. of milk and 369 lbs. of butterfat. In 1972 a slight decrease in total production was noted with a decrease of 415 lbs. in milk production and 8 lbs. in butterfat.

In 1973 Mr. Malak once again increased his herd production to a new high of 11,410 lbs. of milk and 406 lbs. of butterfat.

During the six years this herd has been on test an increase in cows accompanied by a continuous recording program has undoubtedly showed results in the herd management program. Mr. Malak's herd records were converted to the D.H.I. Computerized Program in June of 1972. We wish Mr. Malak continued success with his herd.